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DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

OCTOBER 1941

DOCUMENTARY—THE CREATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

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Films for the Services

WE ARE continuing to pursue our investigations into the subject of films for the Services, and hope in subsequent issues to publish detailed reports. Meantime it is clear that the situation in this respect is far from satisfactory. There would appear to be too little planning and too little co-ordination; and while the Services must naturally retain considerable independence in their film activities, it seems that there should be a closer liaison with the Minister of Information as regards their public relations activities, and with film experts as regards their production problems. There is also still the need for fuller and freer production facilities, as various film makers who have had to deal with the Air Ministry would be the first to testify. But the Army, with its infinitely larger number of men, is bound to be in the forefront in this matter. It has its own Army Film Unit (under Major David Macdonald), which has so far been limited in its production, but claims to have been a generous (and often unacknowledged) supplier of material to the newsreels. This Unit has been very slow in getting under way, but criticism may well be withheld until it has shown more considered results than hitherto. There is also a department at the War Office called M.T.9, which is concerned with Training Films. As these films are apparently secret—except to those who make them—we are not able to review them in D.N.L. The only thing about them which is not secret is the widespread dissatisfaction which exists regarding production methods and treatment of subjects. We have yet to be convinced that the activities of this department do not need careful investigation. Besides all these considerations there remains the question of the entertainment and general instruction of men in the Army, and our information is that there are the sharpest variations of efficiency in this respect in different areas. It is of vital importance that the men in all our armies should not be denied the values which the film can provide in the presentation of a true picture of the world situation as well as of that in our own country: this, in addition to regular entertainment, they should certainly have.

ANTI-FASCIST YOUTH RALLY =

DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKERS IN BRITAIN ARE GLAD TO SEND THEIR GREETINGS TO THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH RALLY IN MOSCOW = CONCERNED WHOLLY WITH PROPAGANDA AS A MAJOR WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM WE ARE PLEDGED TO FURTHER IN ALL OUR FILMS THE EFFORTS OF FREE PEOPLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AGAINST THE FORCES OF HITLERITE GERMANY =

EDGAR ANSTEY DONALD ALEXANDER PAUL ROTHA DONALD TAYLOR JOHN TAYLOR HARRY WATT BASIL WRIGHT TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF THE CROWN FILM UNIT AND ALL WORKERS IN BRITISH DOCUMENTARY FILMS +

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ELT = EDGAR ANSTEY DONALD ALEXANDER PAUL ROTHA DONALD TAYLOR JOHN TAYLOR HARRY WATT BASIL WRIGHT AND WHOLE STAFF CROWN FILM UNIT LONDON =

APPRECIATE YOUR FRIENDLY MESSAGE STOP HOPE THAT IN YOUR DOCUMENTARY FILMS YOU WILL EXPOSE BEASTLY FACE FASCISM AND THEREBY RALLY ENGLISH PEOPLE STILL MORE TO OUR JOINT STRUGGLE AGAINST BITTEREST ENEMY MANKIND FASCISM HERO SOVIET UNION EUGENE FEDEROV CHAIRMAN ANTI FASCIST YOUTH MEETING MOSCOW COMMA ZOYA FEDOROVA SCREEN ACTRESS MEMBER PRESIDIUM MEETING +

Departure Platform

TYPICAL OF the spinelessness of British film propaganda (which is examined more fully in our leading article this month) is the continued survival of the British Council's Films Committee. This Committee must go. It represents an old-fashioned and reactionary outlook which can do this nation nothing but harm amongst free and progressive peoples all over the world. We doubt whether there is a single member of the Committee whose claims to represent propaganda will stand a moment's scrutiny, and this point of view is strengthened by the Committee's own claim that it is not concerned with propaganda but with holding up some sort of a mirror. This is no time to fool about holding up mirrors, and if the Committee is not concerned with propaganda it ought to be sacked before it wastes any more public moneys. The British Council as a whole, tied as it is to the ill-laundered apron strings of the Foreign Office, is not an organisation of which the British people have any reason to be proud; and its Films Department certainly represents an attitude of mind which is entirely divorced from the urgencies of the moment.

Tatler—Anglo-Soviet Films

THE TATLER, Charing Cross Road, is to reopen on October 27th with an Anglo-Soviet film season. Programmes will be comprised of Russian films including features, shorts and newsreels. Much of the material will be provided by the Soviet War News Film Agency, and Mr. Ivor Montagu will be responsible for its selection. It is gratifying to find this decision to reopen the Tatler following so soon upon the suggestion in the September issue of D.N.L. All credit to Commander Arthur Jarrett and Andrew Broom who have made re-opening possible. To many people Andrew Broom and the Tatler are synonymous. The Tatler's unique success was due to his imagination and drive, and his return to the management is the best possible augury for the future.

News from the Western Front

THERE ARE occasions when the newsreels' conception of propaganda is ludicrous. A few months ago an item demonstrated the power of British tanks by showing one of them completing the destruction of bomb-wrecked British homes. A more recent report on our offensive in the West showed H.M. the King inspecting what was said to be Britain's first completely armoured division. To find such an item given premier place in the reels was a shock to audiences who so recently have seen our Russian allies involved in the bloodiest battle in the history of the world. The very idea of proudly presenting this modest collection of tanks, artillery and Bren gun carriers, drawn up as if for a peace-time review, as the principal evidence of Britain's war effort for the week, revealed a staggering misconception of the need in the public mind for Britain to participate more actively in the war. Obviously there were many sound ways in which the scenes could have been given a genuine propaganda value. For example, they might have been used to underline the weakness of our land power and the need for increased production. Provided that somebody could have thought up a commentary line to explain what happened to the sums of money voted for re-armament in the immediate pre-war years, the item might have given a stimulus to production. But to present on the screen at this moment in history an idle British army is one of the best pieces of Nazi propaganda we have seen for a very long time.

Service with a Smile

LATEST NEWS from the Army Training Film front is of a Home Guard Unit which thought that its personnel could be helped by instructional films. The Commanding Officer applied in the appropriate quarter for information about films which might be suitable and after six weeks and a few reminders he received a reply. Unfortunately the envelope contained nothing beyond an erratum slip to be inserted in a catalogue which he did not possess and which he subsequently discovered had been out of print for some time. After a neighbouring Home Guard unit had had a similar experience the whole idea was abandoned.

A CALL TO ACTION

False men were afraid and feigned blindness;
Some laid their legs under them, as such liars can do,
And made their moan for mercy. . . .

"This is a wild way without a leader
To follow each foot", said the folk together,
But Perkin the Plowman answered, "By Saint Peter,
I have half an acre to harrow by the highway!"

The Vision of Piers Plowman

IN THE MIDST of war there is the stirring of a new life, the stirring of people who are young and of the new age. But still in the midst of war there is another stirring, the bustling and bombination of an older age frightened of what is coming. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the field of propaganda, where timidity, evasiveness, ignorance and inaction are forming a smokescreen against facts which should in all conscience be inescapable.

The Nazis are waging a total war. This means that *all* effort is geared to the military scheme. Their use of propaganda, no less than their use of new strategic tactics in the air or by means of panzer thrusts, is part of a basic challenge which must be taken up. Our propaganda has had its Norways and its Cretes, even if the defeats have been less immediately obvious and spectacular.

In face of facts and of events it is no longer possible to conceive of propaganda as anything other than a weapon of equal military importance with Army, Navy or Air Force.

We have not mobilised our propaganda forces in the national crisis.

What is the record?

Has the film industry been mobilised? Have the production studios been incorporated in a definite and well-understood plan? Have the newsreels been properly utilised? Have short film makers been given definite central guidance in their production work? Has the dynamic force which lies in the documentary movement been allowed full outlet? Has there been any planned division of effort in the various fields of propaganda needs? Have the public screens of the country been given a fair deal in the matter of propaganda?

To all these questions the answer is—No.

What are the reasons?

Firstly, a basic weakness which is a matter of national conscience. Here we refer to our present national leadership which, *pace* Churchill's genius, is coming to be regarded as the leadership of a bygone rather than of a present age.

In a world war in which systems of production, economics and social life are perforce being forged anew by both sides we cannot afford to have our efforts directed by those whose outlook is still dominated by the 19th century.

While the R.A.F. is the living example of an organisation of youth redressing the tottering balance of age, our services of propaganda still represent the strangling of the new by the old.

"This war has in part consisted most tragically of a series of exposures of inefficiency in all spheres of effort. In each case the inefficiencies have been due to failure to think in new terms.

But to think in new terms is the commission of propagandists no less than of generals or admirals or air marshals.

Today all over the country people are seeing inefficiency and a *laissez-faire* (if not reactionary) attitude holding back progressive action in their own particular jobs, and thereby they are, not without justice, beginning to question the efficiency of effort in other fields of which they have not first-hand experience.

Said *The Times* Leader on September 24th:

> Lay opinion can hardly pass judgment on issues of detail. But it is entitled to the assurance that the adjustment (of aid to Russia) is made in accordance with a considered plan of campaign, in which strategy and production both play their part. . . . It is also entitled to insist that man-power allocated to industry should produce to full capacity, and should be shackled to no considerations irrelevant to the winning of the war. Here too uncomfortable questions are being asked.

Indeed, questions are being asked. And it is the task of propagandists not merely to answer them, but to ask them too.

The official propagandists have failed to come up to scratch.

There is the sectional interest represented by the Civil Service—as for instance in the exploitation of the propaganda system by departmental politicians. In spite of the machinery which has been set up at the M.O.I., there is still no effective system by which the work of the 25-odd public relations officers of Government departments can be related to a common plan.

There is the sectional interest represented by the Film Industry, and we as an industry must in this respect realise that the Trade in all its sections has in itself failed largely to take up its own responsibilities.

There is, too, the sectional interest represented by the intelligentsia, who have infected the M.O.I. with the virus of dilettantism, which brings with it epidemics of inadequacy blandly self-confessed and excused, epidemics of unbelief, and a constant rash of second-rate energies breaking out in footling and unco-ordinated little enterprises.

The question must be asked: Is the present leadership capable of dealing with a new phase of hard and dynamic effort which we must at all costs pursue, or perish?

Without for a moment trying to evade our own responsibilities as leaders in our own half-acre, we ask the Minister of

Information to conduct a searching re-examination of the leadership in the field of propaganda.

We believe the whole Film Industry will unite if the sepse of a new force in all fields of national effort is made active—that is if it is seen in positive and not in negative terms.

Here are some of the things which must be done.

There must be complete unity of the Film Industry as a fighting force. In other words the Trade as a whole, without regard to sectional bias, must be in a position of fully-planned relationship with the Government as regards the nation's propaganda needs.

There must be a national mobilisation of the industry's man-power.

Co-ordination of all fields of propaganda effort must be tightened up. Apart from the special needs of the Armed Services (where a measure of independence as well as of co-operation is essential) the Minister of Information should see that every film made is an active agent in a national plan of public persuasion.

All propaganda films for the theatres must be box-office. The Director of the Films Division, if not the Minister himself, should be in a position to guarantee this to the Trade.

The present consultations between feature producers and Mr Bracken should lead to a plan for British feature production strictly geared to the national mobilisation for war. If necessary, finance for big films should be available.

As regards documentary, we want a policy which will extend the scope of our propaganda far beyond its present narrow limits—a policy which will have a world perspective on the strategy of the war, and which thereby will permit film makers to range over wider and more varied concepts, and to cover many more varied fields of interest.

We believe in propaganda first and films second. We believe that film propaganda is still being mishandled. We challenge the Laodiceans of the Films Division—if indeed they have not already abandoned the struggle—to disprove this statement.

In this fight of the common people to order their own existence propaganda is a panzer weapon. But the little old men, the paralytics of the Civil Service, the dilettantes and the reactionaries are blocking the road.

Vision must be translated into policy, and policy into action.

We demand a new deal in our propaganda services. We demand a nation-wide call to action.

The world situation is now so critical that it is imperative to formulate without delay new directives for democratic feeling, thought and action.

All media of propaganda—particularly press, radio and film—must be mobilised immediately.

Direct, clear statement is urgent under the following two heads:

1. WORLD STRATEGY.
2. WAR TACTICS AND WAR POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND HER EMPIRE.

These statements should be made through all propaganda media.

As regards films the following subjects should be put into production at once and completed without delay.

1. WORLD STRATEGY

The world situation must be presented on a much broader front. The people must have a clearer idea of the tactics of the war in relation to the world distribution of military and economic forces.

First film. **The military and economic position in the world now.** The relation between the opposing military powers as regards land power, sea power and the power over raw materials. (A film of this sort should appear each month, related to the immediate strategical position.)

Second film. **The rôle of the U.S.S.R. in the war.** Why Germany attacked Russia and the means by which she hopes to defeat her. The strength which Germany would have at her disposal if she were to beat Russia. How Russia is defending herself. The aid which she needs from Britain and the United States and how it can be and is being supplied.

Third film. **Perspective on Germany.** It is time that the people of Britain were given a direct and objective picture of what they are up against, not in terms of ideologies and barbarisms of which they are extremely well aware, but in terms of Germany's political organisation, military power, military and economic planning, and her relations with other countries, particularly those which remain neutral.

2. WAR TACTICS AND WAR POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND HER EMPIRE

First film. **Man-power.** The position of skilled man-power in this country as regards Allied needs. This to be a statement on the question of what proportion of skilled man-power is needed in the Services and what proportion for the supply of war materials. It is essential that the present public confusion of thought on this matter should be cleared up once and for all.

Second film. **Are we eating too much?** Are we using for food supplies shipping which might well be transferred to military use? This film should raise the question of whether all the types of foodstuffs being imported are vitally necessary from a nutritional standpoint. It would also give a detailed study of the need for a rational distribution of nutritional foods to the population of this country. This film also provides opportunity to expose the black market racket.

Third film. **Raw materials.** The pre-war, present and post-war disposition and control of essential raw materials in relation to the policies laid down in the Atlantic Charter.

Fourth film. **Strategy of the war in terms of will.** A study of the Will to Win based on the direct challenge to the will-power of the democracies represented by the Nazi machine. The film would describe the steps which must be taken to build a democratic will of superior strength based on the rights of man and translatable into immediate, efficient and successful action.

ROSTER OF M.O.I. FILMS, SEPTEMBER 3rd, 1939, TILL AUGUST 31st, 1941

We are indebted to the Ministry of Information for permission to publish the following lists of films and statistical analysis.

1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

** indicates a five-minute film. † indicates a 5 minute film acquired from an outside source. Names in brackets do not appear on the credit titles of the films concerned. "O" indicates that a film has been sent overseas. "R" indicates a D.N.L. review. "W" indicates that the film has been withdrawn from the Central Film Library.*

TITLE	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	LENGTH	RELEASE DATE T.	RELEASE DATE NT.	NOTES
*Ack-Ack	Shell	E. Anstey	P. Baylis	790	4/41	6/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 67
Adeste Fideles	Strand	B. Wright	R. Keene and R. Bond	1,200	—	—	Not yet issued. R. Vol. II., p. 68.
*Air Communique	Crown	(H. Watt)	(R. Elton)	598	11/40	—	O. R. Vol. I, No. XII, p. 7
*Airwoman	G.B. Screen Services	—	F. Searle	761	6/41	8/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 149
Alert in the East	Movietone	G. Sanger	(Edited by) R. Perrin	917	—	9/41	O. Newsreel compilation. First despatched overseas 4/41
*†Albert's Savings	Merton Park	W. Williams	H. Purcell	458	8/40	10/40	Produced for the National Savings Committee
All About Carrots	British Found. Pict.	—	R. Haines	805	—	9/41	
All Hands	Ealing	M. Balcon	J. Carstairs	1,032	4/40	9/40	O. Home T. distribution by M.G.M. R. Vol. I, No. V, p. 17
*Any Old Iron	Merton Park	—	—	510	1/41	9/40	Compiled from library material. Identical Non-T. version titled Feed the Furnaces
*Ashley Green Goes to School	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Eldridge	647	10/40	1/41	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton. Longer Non-T. version titled: Village School (1,000 ft.). R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
*A-tish-oo!	Verity	Jay Lewis	(Jay Lewis and M. Munden)	558	2/41	—	R. Vol. II, p. 89
*A.T.S.	Army Film Unit	—	(H. Stewart)	676	6/41	8/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 128
Bampton Shows the Way	Realist	P. Rotha	B. Peake	564	—	3/41	
Behind the Guns	Merton Park	C. Musk	M. Tully	1,881	7/40	9/40	O. Home T. distribution by Newsreel Association. R. Vol. I, No. VIII, p. 12.
Big City, The	Strand	A. Shaw	R. Bond	1,160	—	10/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. VIII, p. 12
*Britain at Bay	Crown	—	—	650	8/40	10/40	O. Compiled fron library material. Commentary by J. B. Priestley. Identical overseas version titled: Britain on Guard
*Britain Can Take It	Crown	(H. Watt)	—	785	10/40	12/40	W. O. Commentary by Q. Reynolds. A slightly longer overseas version titled London Can Take It. R. Vol. I, No. XI, p. 14
Britain's Youth	Strand	(A. Shaw)	(J. Ellitt)	1,120	—	10/40	O. Commentary by C. B. Fry. R. Vol. I, No. IX, p. 13
British Power	Universal	—	—	905	—	—	O. Newsreel compilation. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 5/40
(Canteen on Wheels)	See Mobile Canteen						
*Call for Arms, A	D. & P.	B. Hurst	B. Hurst	721	7/40	—	O. With Jean Gillie, Rene Ray and others
(Carrier Pigeons)	See Winged Messengers						
Casserole Cooking	Verity	Jay Lewis	—	600	—	12/40	
*Channel Incident	D. & P.	A. Asquith	A. Asquith	859	9/40	—	O. With Peggy Ashcroft, Gordon Harker and others
*Christmas Under Fire	Crown	(H. Watt)	(C. Hasse)	982	1/41	—	O. R. Vol. II, p. 29
*Citizens' Advice Bureau	G.B. Screen Services	L. Arliss	F. Searle	780	6/41	8/41	
(Citizens' Army)	See Home Guard						
Coal Front	G.B.I.	B. Woolfe	F. Searle	965	—	12/40	O. R. Vol. II, p. 9
Coastal Defence	Movietone News	—	—	970	—	10/40	O. Newsreel compilation. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 9
Crumbs and Crust	A. & D.	—	A. Bryce	530	—	10/41	With Hay Petrie and others
*Dai Jones	Verity	Jay Lewis	D. Birt	677	3/41	5/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 67
Dangerous Comment	Ealing	M. Balcon	J. Carstairs	1,028	5/40	9/40	O. Home T. distribution by M.G.M. R. Vol. I, No. V, p. 17
*Dawn Guard, The	Charter Films	J. Boulting	R. Boulting	593	1/41	3/41	O. With Percy Walsh and Bernard Miles. R. Vol. II, p. 28
Defeat Diphtheria	Paul Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	B. Peake	1,024	—	6/41	R. Vol. II, p. 107
Do It Now	G.P.O.	—	—	995	9/39	—	Home T. distribution by Newsreel Association
(Drums in the Desert)	See Italy Beware						
*Eating Out	Strand	—	D. Dickinson	602	5/41	—	O. With Tommy Trinder, Jean Colin and others. R. Vol. II, p. 107
Emergency Cooking Stove	Films of Gt. Britain	—	A. Buchanan	790	—	10/41	
(Feed the Furnaces)	See Any Old Iron						
*Fighter Pilot	Movietone News	G. Sanger	(Edited by) R. Perrin	701	12/40	2/41	O.
Fighting Fields	G.B.I.	Mary Field	S. Russell	1,065	—	4/41	O. Produced in association with Scottish Films Ltd.
First Days, The	G.P.O.	A. Cavalcanti	—	2,135	11/39	—	Home T. dist. by A.B.P.C. R. Vol. I, No. I, p. 6
Fitness for Service	G.B.I.	—	J. Warren	776	—	1/41	
Five and Under	Paul Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	D. Alexander	1,472	—	—	O. Not yet issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 9/41
*Food for Thought	Ealing	J. Croydon	A. Brunel	510	7/40	—	With Mabel Constanduros, Muriel George & others
Food from the Empire	Merton Park	—	T. Thumwood	892	—	10/40	W. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 9
From the Four Corners	D. & P.	—	A. Havelock-Allen	1,406	6/41	9/41	O. With Leslie Howard, Home T. distribution by M.G.M. First despatched overseas 4/41
From the Seven Seas	G.B.I.	—	L. Schauder	993	—	—	O. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 11/40
*Front Line, The	G.P.O.	—	(H. Watt)	567	10/40	12/40	O.
Furnaces of Industry	Merton Park	—	C. Musk	1,067	11/40	2/41	O. Home T. distribution by United Artists
*Goofer Trouble	D. & P.	—	M. Elvey	671	12/40	—	O.
Health in War	G.P.O.	(H. Watt)	P. Jackson	1,195	—	11/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. XII, p. 9
*Heart of Britain, The	Crown	—	(Edited by H. Jennings)	921	2/41	4/41	O. American version titled: This is England. R. Vol. II, p. 48
*Her Father's Daughter	Butcher's Film Service	—	D. Dickinson	918	12/40	2/41	O. With Jennifer Gray, Viola Lyel and others
Herrings	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	600	—	12/40	
*Home Guard	Strand	D. Taylor	D. Taylor and I. Moffat	728	5/41	10/41	O. With Bernard Miles. Substantially modified Non-T. version titled: Citizen's Army (940 ft.). R. Vol. II, p. 107
How to Dig	Selwyn	—	J. Ellitt	1,360	—	10/41	(Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey) R. Vol. II, p. 191
India's Navy Grows	Movietone News	—	—	594	—	—	O. Newsreel compilation. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 2/41
*†India Marches	Bombay Talkies	—	—	490	3/41	5/41	Re-edited by Crown from A Day in the Life of the Indian Army. Commentary by Z. Bokhari. R. Vol. II, p. 149

(continued on next page)

TITLE	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	LENGTH	RELEASE DATE T.	RELEASE DATE NT.	NOTES
Into the Blue	G.B.I.	—	—	950	1/41	9/40	O. Newsreel compilation. Home T. dist. by Warners
Italy Beware	Paramount	T. Cummins	—	1,267	5/40	—	O. Newsreel compilation. Home T. distribution by Anglo-American. Identical overseas version titled: Drums of the Desert. R. Vol. I, No. VII, p. 7
Job to be Done, A	Shell	A. Elton	D. Alexander	898	—	10/40	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
Kill that Rat!	Merton Park	—	T. Bishop	842	—	6/41	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey. R. Vol. II, p. 107
King's Men, The	Movietone News	—	—	779	—	9/40	O. Newsreel compilation
*Lady, be Kind	Corfield	(J. Corfield)	R. Ackland	711	7/41	—	(With Muriel George.) R. Vol. II, p. 147
Letter from Home	20th Century Fox	(E. Black)	C. Reed	1,492	—	—	O. With Celia Johnson. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 6/41
Lion of Judah	Army Film Unit	—	(G. Boothby)	1,382	—	9/41	
Living with Strangers	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	1,109	—	7/41	Assoc. Producer: B. Wright. R. Vol. II, p. 149
*Lofoten	Army Film Unit	—	(T. D'Eyncourt)	564	3/41	5/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 68
(London Can Take It)	See Britain Can Take It						
Men of the Lightship	G.P.O.	Cavalcanti	D. Macdonald	2,272	8/40	10/40	O. Home T. dist. by A.B.F.D. R. Vol. I, No. IX, p. 12
Merchant Seamen	Crown	—	J. Holmes	2,179	6/41	9/41	O. Home T. distribution by G.F.D. R. Vol. II, p. 88
*Miss Grant Goes to the Door	D. & P.	B. Hurst	B. Hurst	680	8/40	10/40	W.
Mother and Child	Realist	—	F. Sainsbury	944	—	11/40	With Barbara Mullen. Assoc. Producer: B. Wright. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 9
*†Mobile Canteen	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	710	4/41	7/41	Assoc. Producer: B. Wright. Longer Non-T. version titled: Canteen on Wheels. R. Vol. II, p. 47
*Mr. Borland Thinks Again	British Films	P. Rotha	P. Rotha	700	9/40	—	With Herbert Lomas, Emlyn Williams, Beatrix Lehmann and others
*Mr. Proudfoot Shows a Light	20th Century-Fox	(E. Black)	Herbert Mason	693	3/41	5/41	O.
Musical Poster No. 1	—	L. Lye	—	225	7/40	—	O. Technicolor Abstract. Home T. distribution by Newsreel Association
*Neighbours under Fire	Strand	—	R. Bond	662	12/40	2/41	O. R. Vol. I, No. XII, p. 7
*New Acres	Shell	E. Anstey	N. Baxter	748	8/41	10/41	O. With Herbert Lomas and others. R. Vol. II, p. 167
New Bread	Merton Park	—	—	600	—	8/41	Compiled from library material
New Britain, The	Strand	A. Shaw	R. Keene	1,000	—	10/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. VIII, p. 13
*†New Zealand Has Wings	N.Z. National Film Unit	—	—	484	9/41	—	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from Wings Over New Zealand
*Night Watch	Strand	D. Taylor	D. Taylor	694	7/41	9/41	O. Assoc. Producer: R. Bond. With Anne Firth, Cyril Chamberlain and others. R. Vol. II, p. 128
*Northern Outpost	Army Film Unit	—	(T. d'Eyncourt)	799	2/41	4/41	O. Guards of the North, assembled in Canada partly from the same material, is also being distributed non-theatrically in Britain. R. Vol. II, p. 47
Now You're Talking	Ealing	M. Balcon	J. Carstairs	1,110	5/40	9/40	O. With Sebastian Shaw, Dorothy Hyson and other. Home T. dist. by M.G.M. R. Vol. I, No. V, p. 17
Nurse!	Pathe	—	—	874	—	9/40	R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
Oatmeal Porridge	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	600	—	12/40	
Ordinary People	Crown	—	J. Holmes	2,447	—	—	O. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 5/41
Our School	Realist	P. Rotha	D. Alexander	1,562	—	3/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 47
*†Owner Comes Aboard	Spectator	I. Scott	A. Bryce	527	11/40	1/41	With Charles Doe and others
*Pilot is Safe, The	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	J. Lee	792	9/41	11/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 191
Potatoes	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	600	—	12/40	
*Queen's Messengers	Strand	Jay Lewis	—	606	7/41	9/41	Assoc. Producer: B. Wright. R. Vol II, p. 129
Raising Sailors	Pathe	F. Watts and A. Curtis	—	1,100	1/41	9/40	O. Newsreel compilation. Home T. dist. by Butchers
Raising Soldiers	Movietonews	—	—	910	2/40	9/40	O. Newsreel compilation. Home T. dist. by A.B.F.D.
Raw Materials	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	1,037	—	12/40	O.
Religion and the People	British Films	—	A. Buchanan	1,372	—	10/40	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
Ring of Steel	(Paramount)	T. Cummins	—	1,202	—	—	O. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 5/40. R. Vol. I, No. VI, p. 8
*†Royal Australian Navy	Commonwealth Cinema, Melbourne	—	R. Smart	602	9/41	—	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from It's The Navy
*Salvage with a Smile	Ealing	(M. Balcon)	A. Brunel	608	8/40	10/40	O.
*Scaremongers, The	D. & P.	—	G. Cutts	673	9/40	—	Wrongly listed in "D.N.L.", Vol. I, No. 11, p. 5 as Miss Know-All
Scotland Speaks	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Elliott	1,897	4/41	9/41	O. Home T. distribution by A.B.F.D.
*Sea Cadets	Strand	Jay Lewis	Jay Lewis	715	7/41	9/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 149
*Sea Fort	Ealing	—	I. Dalrymple	620	8/40	10/40	O.
Shipbuilders	G.B.I.	—	L. Schauder	973	11/40	1/41	O. Home T. distribution by G.F.D.
*Shunter Black's Night Off	Verity	S. Box & J. Carr	M. Munden	565	8/41	10/41	R. Vol. II, p. 167
Silage	British Films	—	A. Buchanan	1,109	—	10/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
Simple Soups	Brit. Found. Pictures	—	R. Haines	852	—	10/41	
*†South Africa Marches	African Film Productions	—	—	607	8/41	—	Re-edited by Sylvia Cummins from Sinews of War and Road to Victory. The former is dist. non-theatrically
Sowing and Planting	Selwyn	C. Radley	J. Elliott	1,100	—	11/41	(Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey)
(Spring Offensive)	See Unrecorded Victory						
Squadron 992	G.P.O.	Cavalcanti	H. Watt	2,028	6/40	—	O. Home T. dist. by Columbia. R. Vol. I, No. V, p. 6
Steaming	Verity	—	Jay Lewis	600	—	12/40	
Target for Tonight	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	H. Watt	4,473	8/41	—	O. Home T. dist. by A.B.F.D. R. Vol. II, p. 147
*Team, The	A.B.P.C.	—	L. Arliss & N. Lee	520	8/41	10/41	With George Allison. R. Vol. II, p. 167
*Telefootlers	Verity	—	(J. Carstairs)	609	17/2	—	With Barbara Everest, Muriel George and others. R. Vol. II, p. 47
They Also Serve	Realist	—	Ruby Grierson	907	—	12/40	O.
(This is England)	See The Heart of Britain						
Tomorrow is Theirs	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Carr	910	—	12/40	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton
Transfer of Skill	Shell	A. Elton	G. Bell	931	—	12/40	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton. R. Vol. I, No. XI, p. 15
Two Cooks and a Cabbage	A. & D.	—	A. Bryce	549	—	10/41	R. Vol. II, p. 168
Undersea Patrol	Paramount	—	—	567	2/40	—	O. Home T. distribution by Paramount
Unrecorded Victory	G.P.O.	Cavalcanti	H. Jennings	1,855	1/41	10/40	Home T. distribution by M.G.M. Identical Non-T version titled Spring Offensive. R. Vol. I, No. XII, p. 7
*Visit from Canada	Realist	—	(J. Taylor)	600	5/41	7/41	O. Rushes also sent to Canada for recutting. R. Vol. II, p. 107
(Village School)	See Ashley Green Goes to School						
Voice of the Guns, The	Pathe	—	—	976	6/40	—	O. Home T. distribution by Anglo American
*War and Order	G.P.O.	(H. Watt)	C. Hasse	626	1/41	10/40	O. Non-T. version: 1,087 ft. R. Vol. II, p. 9
Wartime Factory	Strand	A. Shaw	E. Anstey	980	—	10/40	O. Assoc. Producer: A. Elton.
Welfare of the Workers	G.P.O.	(H. Watt)	P. Jackson	827	—	11/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. XI, p. 14
*Westward Ho!	D. & P.	—	D. Dickinson	827	7/40	—	
*We've Got to Get Rid of the Rats	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Carr	630	12/40	2/41	Assoc. Producer: A. Elton, with Bill Dalton. R. Vol. II, p. 9
We Won't Forget	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	1,122	—	—	O. Assoc. Producer: B. Wright. Not issued in Britain. First despatched overseas 5/41
When the Pie was Opened	Realist	—	L. Lye	737	—	10/41	R. Vol. II, p. 147
White Battlefront	Seven League	—	H. Nieter	926	—	10/40	O. R. Vol. I, No. X, p. 8
*Winged Messengers	G.B.I.	—	Mary Field	692	6/41	9/41	O. Longer Non-T. version titled: Carrier Pigeons (1,068 ft.). R. Vol. II, p. 128
Women at War	Verity	—	Edited by Louise Birt	901	—	—	O. Newsreel compilation. With J. Winant. Commentary by Mary Welch. First despatched overseas 9/41
*Words for Battle	Crown	(I. Dalrymple)	(Edited by H. Jennings)	707	4/41	6/41	O. Commentary by Laurence Olivier. R. Vol. II, p. 89
*Yesterday is Over Your Shoulder	D. & P.	T. Dickinson	T. Dickinson	764	9/40	11/40	O.
*You're Telling Me	Paul Rotha Prodn.	P. Rotha	B. Peake	566	3/41	5/41	O. R. Vol. II, p. 68

2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

(Average length: 170 ft.)

TITLE OR THEME	PROD. UNIT	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT CONCERNED	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
What to do in an Air Raid	—	Home Security	5/40	A separate version made by each newsreel company
Incendiary Bomb	Universal	Home Security	6/40	
Local Defence Volunteers	Movietone	War Office	8/40	
Anderson Shelter (1)	Pathe	Home Security	9/40	
Gas Masks	G.B.	Home Security	9/40	
Your Home as an Air Raid Shelter	Universal	Home Security	10/40	
Post Early	Pathe	G.P.O.	12/40	
Anderson Shelter (2)	Universal	Home Security	12/40	
Morning Blackout	G.B.	Home Security	1/41	
Economical Use of Coal	Movietone	Mines Department	2/41	Restricted distribution
Recruits for Munitions	A. Buchanan	Labour	3/41	Re-issued 6/41
Stop that Fire	Crown	Home Security	3/41	Also issued non-theatrically
Carry Your Gas Mask	Universal	Home Security	5/41	
Diphtheria	G.B.	Health	5/41	
Paper Saving	Universal	Supply	7/41	
Help for the Homeless	G.B.	Health and Home Security	8/41	
Shelter at Home	Movietone	Home Security	8/41	

3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

These films, supervised by Mr. George Sellers, are designed for exhibition to African audiences. After the outbreak of war nine films were acquired from the British Council, the Imperial Institute and Messrs. Kodak Ltd. These films—some of which had to be re-edited—included not only Empire subjects, but "Killing the Killer" (a fight between a mongoose and a cobra to symbolize Churchill and Hitler) and a Chaplin film. Since then the following new productions have been completed.

TITLE	LENGTH (35 mm.)	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	NOTES
Children of the Empire	860	3/40	Re-edited from a film in the Imperial Institute
Empire at Work, The	2,200	3/40	Compiled chiefly from library material by BRITISH FILMS LTD.
Heritage of Defence	920	3/40	Re-edited from a film in the Kodak Library
British Army, The	2,062	11/40	
Mr. English at Home	2,630	11/40	
Story of Cotton, The	1,150	11/40	
Royal Air Force, The	1,040	12/40	
Guns in the Desert	476	1/41	Re-edited version of Italy Beware
Progress in the Colonies	1,030	4/41	
English and African Life	636	5/41	
African in London, An	1,125	7/41	

Note: On August 31st 1941, a further seven films were awaiting despatch—one was being edited and others were in production.

4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

NUMBERS OF FILMS

Type of film	Number of films delivered		
	Year ending Aug. 31, 1940	Year ending Aug. 31, 1941	TOTAL
5-Minute films	8	48	56
Miscellaneous and films for commercial release	13	9	22
Non-T films	—	45	45
Films for overseas use only ..	2	6	8
TOTAL ..	23	108	131
Trailers	3	14	17
Colonial Film Unit Productions	3	8	11

FOOTAGES OF FILMS

Type of film	Combined footage of films delivered		
	Year ending Aug. 31, 1940	Year ending Aug. 31, 1941	TOTAL
5-Minute films	5,074	33,390	38,464
Miscellaneous and films for commercial release	16,426	14,290	30,716
Non-T films	—	42,987	42,987
Films for overseas use only ..	2,107	8,327	10,434
TOTAL ..	23,607	98,994	122,601
Trailers	510	2,380	2,890
Colonial Film Unit Productions	3,980	10,149	14,129

HATS OFF TO AG AND FISH

FOR THE past year the Ministry of Agriculture has been producing and building up a library of first-class instructional films. The films, which are produced for them by the M.O.I., are mainly for non-theatrical showing and, apart from one on backyard poultry keeping, are of two sorts, one for gardeners and allotment holders, the other for farmers. Of the films for gardeners, three are already finished—*How to Dig*, *Sowing and Planting*, and *Cultivation*, one is nearly ready—*Harvesting and Storage*, and others, such as one on winter work, are in contemplation. Besides these there's the five-minute theatrical film *Dig for Victory*, made partly from cuts of the instructionals. For the farmers, films on rat-destruction and silage are completed and films on building and thatching a stack, on ditching and on ploughing are in what is known as "active preparation." A five-minute theatrical film *New Acres* has already been shown. The non-theatrical films will be road-shown at maximum M.O.I. capacity at the appropriate seasons of the year.

There is something particularly pleasant about the production of these films, quite apart from the surprising experience of finding a government department actively engaged in any sort of long-term film production programme. In the first place the films, apart from *Dig for Victory*, are not in any way propaganda in the narrow patronising sense in which it is often understood by government departments. The gardening films, for instance, do not set out to persuade you to take an allotment, they do not even particularly boost this or that way of doing a job: they assume that their audience is already interested in the subject and go on to show one proved and successful way of doing certain jobs. And it is just because of this that they are such fine propaganda for gardens and allotments in general. There can be hardly anybody who, after watching the skill and control with which the lad in the films does his gardening and the pleasure he obviously takes in his work and in handling his plants, won't conceive an envy for that skill and love, and want to get himself a garden or allotment and try and match it for himself. Or, if he already has one, he'll want to keep it more up to the mark. These films, perhaps for the first time in British propaganda, put a good case for discipline—not the fake, blind discipline of *Target for Tonight*, but real discipline, the discipline of the job. Soil needs digging and looking after, plants need care and attention, and if they don't get it, or don't get it just when they want it, you'll see them wither or run to seed before your eyes. In other words you get your nose rubbed in a few hard facts of nature and growth. How different this healthy discipline is from the fake, masochistic disciplines that are all that, say, the National Savings Campaign has to offer, with its appeal to sportsmanship and patriotism, or the Ministry of Food with its priggish talk of "fair shares" and Lord Woolton doing a one-man picket of luxury greengrocers, because they sold strawberries at 25*s*. a pound. Show a man a job that needs doing and he'll get on with it. We're not by nature Kibitzers as the Americans call people who stand and watch a job being done. Walking through London the morning after a raid everybody must have felt the strength of the pull to stop and lend a hand to the lad sweeping up the glass or tunnelling under the débris to pull a pal out. Any gardener knows the feeling which so often makes him a nuisance to his neighbours, of wanting to put right, for its own sake, anything that is wrong with any plant he claps eyes on. You can't walk a couple of yards with a gardener without him darting aside to pull up a weed, nip off a shoot or help a plant up its stick. This discipline of knowing what has to be done and dedicating yourself to the task of seeing that it is done, is the only discipline worth having, and not the least merit of these films is that they do in fact imply just that discipline.

The gardening films are, so far, the more fascinating of the two. In the same way that gardens and allotments are on a smaller scale and have a more intensified culture than fields and farms, so the gardening films are themselves more detailed and concentrated than the farming ones. The gardening films are being made with the co-operation of the Royal Horticultural Society, which guarantees that they will be free of gardening howlers, though of course you will never get two gardeners to agree on the proper way to do any job. What is more, the makers of the films have cleverly avoided the aura of royal patronage, large gardens and estates, and forelock-pulling under-gardeners which hangs over the activities of the Royal Horticultural Society. As he goes about the work on his allotment, the lad in the films looks pleasantly sturdy and independent, and seems to be doing the work to please himself, and to be setting his own rhythm. Which brings us to another point that emerges through these gardening films: at a time when a man's place in the world is becoming increasingly complicated and remote from direct and active responsibility, gardening offers a job where, within the set limits that its own discipline demands, a man can please himself, set his own pace and savour his own proper position in the universe.

The farming films are necessarily more purely instructional in effect. Farm labourers, naturally, as hired men, cannot feel the independence in their jobs that gardeners do; though it is surprising how far a farm worker will identify himself with his job, and take complete responsibility for it and for its effects. Anyway, the films do concentrate on the job for its own sake, as demanded by the nature of things, with only a very sidelong glance at present expediencies and the profit system. And so the Ministry of Agriculture can rest assured that their films will be just as good and valuable after the war. Let's give a hearty welcome to these films, not only for the fascination of seeing a job well done, not only for their value as instruction, but also for the clear edge of their message, one of the few propaganda weapons that will not turn against the man who uses it.

SOVIET FILMS

LABOUR parties, Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies can now show sound-films of Russia's heroic resistance to the Nazi invader.

The Workers' Film Association Ltd. have been entrusted with the distribution of all newly released sub-standard Soviet films. So far those released include *U.S.S.R. For Victory*, in which Stalin's famous "scorched earth" appeal to the Soviet people is reproduced in English. The film of Molotov addressing the Soviet workers, concluding with the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Pact is also in the hands of the W.F.A. for distribution to democratic bodies. *Local Counter Attack* will be ready in a few days. The price for hiring these films is:—*U.S.S.R. For Victory* (20 minutes), 10*s*. per day; *Molotov's Speech* and *The Signing of the Anglo-Soviet Pact* (12 minutes), 6*s*. per day; *Local Counter Attack* (7 minutes), 5*s*. per day.

The W.F.A. offer to all workers' organisations a full week of film shows, with as many shows each day as they can organise, for the sum of £18. 18*s*. per week of six days.

Where it is beyond the means of a single organisation to take advantage of this offer, very successful Film Weeks can be run by the joint action of neighbouring Parties, Unions or Co-ops. By moving the show from one place to another during the week, the films reach a wide audience and generally stimulate a demand for more shows in other districts. Apart from war news, the scheme provides for a wide range of social, sports, instructional and entertainment films, a great many of which have been photographed by workers in various parts of the world.

Arrangements can be made to provide advance publicity in the form of specially designed posters and handbills at cost price.

The W.F.A. Film Service is a great boon to workers' organisations during the wartime winter months when activities are difficult to arrange. Further details can be obtained from the Secretary-Manager, Workers' Film Association Ltd., Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Telephone: Victoria 9434, Extension 264.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Peace—by Adolf Hitler. *Production:* March of Time (No. 4, seventh year). *Distribution:* R.K.O. Radio Pictures. 18 minutes.

THIS LATEST *March of Time* item is obviously directed against isolationist sentiment in the United States. Its object is to persuade isolationists and American citizens likely to be influenced by isolationist views, that any assurances by Hitler that he has no designs against America are as worthless as his similar promises to the succession of European states whom he has in turn attacked and destroyed. Each section of the film begins with a Hitler promise to a neutral country, recited in English translation with a German accent, and supported by the written text on the screen. Then we are shown graphically in terms of newsreel scenes of war how faithfully the promise has been kept. The climax is the Russo-German pact followed by scenes on Germany's Eastern Front. All this perfidy is related to a description of the activities of American peace groups who still believe that America should negotiate with Hitler. The moral is clear.

The basic idea is, of course, brilliant in its simplicity. Yet something has gone wrong in translating it into screen terms. The film is quite unmoving. The approach is dry and academic and without that delayed dramatic punch which can come from clever understatement. This fault has lately been noticeable in many *March of Time* items. One has the impression that less care than formerly is taken with the commentary and that, as a result, the dramatic overtones and emphases which were once a characteristic, particularly of the international items, are now missing. There are few examples these days of the old *March of Time* trick of giving a line of commentary an unexpected twist by a particularly brilliant choice of image. One remembers, also, the opposite process of giving new significance to a familiar image by some *mot juste* in commentary. The item on Austria of a few years ago was particularly strong in such examples of *March of Time* virtuosity in relating picture to spoken word. You may remember that it ended with a megalomaniac extract from "Mein Kampf" viciously attacking France and asserting Germany's determination to dominate the world, and that this was illustrated by quiet scenes of French peasants working amongst German war-graves of 1914–18. It is very much to be hoped that *March of Time*, which still leads the field in pictorial journalism, is not going to slip back into commonplace, run-of-the-week, picture-commentary stuff. There obviously must be a danger of staleness after so many years in the same kind of production, and perhaps all that is needed is a reminder of the original *March of Time* discovery that the greatest dramatic power does not come exclusively from picture or from commentary but from the imaginative skill with which the two are related.

A Good Landfall. Strand Film Co. for the Salvation Army. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Direction:* Michael Gordon. *Camera:* Lionel Banes. With Caven Watson and Cyril Chamberlain. 9 minutes.

A Good Landfall is the story of a night train from Edinburgh. It is packed with men of the Services, the threads of whose lives interweave for a few hours of the night. One of these is a little Scots sailor who has just left his child in a hospital—her life at crisis. He is going to sea and months will pass in desperate anxiety before he gets a word of her fate. His harassed spirit is seen in his face. By a stratagem against time another kindly man makes news of the verdict possible.

The film is good propaganda because it is an exciting account of kindly people helping themselves. The Salvation Army and the cupper tea —also part of the story—do not intrude.

It is good propaganda because it gives the lie to that "just a cog in a great machine" complex. At any rate the little Scots sailor and his fellow-passenger mesh into a side-train of gears which run back to a source more fundamental than some self-willed mainspring in a brass hat.

Photography, direction and story all deserve high marks. The Scots sailor (Caven Watson) is a great find, a vivid and natural player. In parts I had the feeling of seeing a French film.

The Children See it Thru'. A Paul Rotha Production. *Direction:* Yvonne Fletcher. *Commentary:* Arthur Mann.

THERE are times when a film bridges the difficult gulf between supplication and documentary, when exposition and purpose narrowly interlock. Yvonne Fletcher's lucid and unselfconscious little film covering both these territories, is of necessity a compromise. It is, however, an honest piece of reporting and an irresistibly moving plea. If American audiences, for whom exclusively the picture was made, can resist the message of these gasmasked babes babbling in the shelter, hopscotching and playing "touch" in the grisly ruins of shattered slum streets, then they must indeed be stony of heart and sterile of imagination.

The Children See it Thru' is a screen argument in favour of assistance for the American Save the Children Committee's work with child victims of the London blitz. Its technique is simple—a detached sober glimpse of the bombing, of lisping babes in respirators, of the playground in the débris—and of the translation by the A.S.C.M. of the children to the rest-homes and nurseries in the sylvan peace of the countryside. Back of it all the sober undramatic voice of Arthur Mann, European representative of the Mutual Broadcasting system, underlines the visual factors, brings the factual story to propaganda life, gives the film that final American ratification which should cement its appeal in the U.S.A.

Wisely, since the film aims to reach a wide American audience, than which there is nothing more heterogeneous, Yvonne Fletcher has avoided cinematic smart-alecry, eschewed pseudo montage, disdained trick camera angles. It is plain reportage in elementary terms, and all the more convincing and persuasive for its freedom from clichés or technical platitudes. Pointed is the device that when the tale of rescue and relief has been told brings the camera back with a jolt to the gasmasked babies and the rubble, wise the judgment which avoids horrors for the sake of making the spectator's flesh creep.

It is a vast subject and one slight film can but touch the fringe of it. But touch it exactly and convincingly it does: it should be the first of a whole series.

Eating at Work. *Production:* Strand for the British Commercial Gas Association. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. *Direction;* Ralph Bond. *Photography:* Gerald Gibbs. *Distribution:* Non-theatrical. 12 minutes.

Eating at Work is a film mainly about factory canteens. Rationing, bombing, evacuation, overtime, night shift, housewives at work, have all complicated the business of workers getting themselves properly fed, and factory canteens, supplemented by the communal British Restaurants, are often the most obvious and ideologically sound solution. This film makes the case for that solution, and it is interesting to consider for whose information it was thought necessary to make such a film. Sensibly and naturally the film does not waste its time appealing to the already convinced general public. Workers and housewives do not need to be told that this is the way to do the thing, they know it already. The people who need telling are those factory managements which are too mean and shortsighted to provide proper canteens for their workers; and government departments which are too scared of these vested interests to compel them to, and too influenced by the representatives of chain restaurants installed in high executive and advisory positions in the Government to give proper publicity and facilities for British Restaurants. The number of British Restaurants in this country could be doubled in a month if local authorities were properly informed of their obligations and ratepayers of their opportunities.

So far so good. The line of the film, as we expect of Ralph Bond, is sound. But technically the film is a great disappointment. It is admittedly a difficult subject to treat dramatically, but some sort of effort should have been made to get beyond the old March of Time technique of the whole story told in a straight and continuous commentary "illustrated" by more or less rele-

(*continued on p.* 191)

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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ARMY FILMS

By WILLIAM E. DICK

Following the note of the month in September D.N.L. concerning Service films we are glad to publish this article by a technical expert who has had first-hand experience in the Army.

SO AT LAST, according to the Press, the war is to be filmed from the British side! The army will release one hundred non-commissioned men for immediate training as front-line movie cameramen. They will go forward with the army—as far forward as the fighting men. The action pictures which they are to bring back will fill a need which has been obvious for a long time. They will provide meat for the newsreels, material for the broader sweep of the documentary director, and also background and detail for the producer of army instructional films.

In a recent number of *D.N.L.* Alderman J. Reeves wrote as follows of the ordinary civilian: "He has long and tedious hours of hard work, having lost many of the amenities which he had obtained after years of struggle, and although the insecurity of peace times is more or less absent, he contemplates the peace with some misgivings, for if the last war is a criterion he may again have to face years of unemployment. He sees no film on his achievements. No attempt is made to credit him with offering his all in the interests of military success and yet that is what he is literally doing." After 18 months' service I could not avoid thinking that much of what he said applied to the ordinary soldier as well as to the ordinary civilian! There has been no *Target for Tonight* for the army—yet. There have been few spectacular victories for the army, and perhaps for this reason no cinematic "glory." (Coming of a generation which puts no great store in the spectacular, I am not sorry that film men have been unable to reproduce another Charge of the Light Brigade!) But one cannot help thinking that there is abundant material for good documentary films presenting a balanced picture of the war as it is fought today. In spite of the necessary restrictions, literary men have been able to produce a few interesting "documentary" books about the war; for instance Linklater's account of army life in the Shetlands, Orkneys, and Iceland, while Masefield's "Nine Days' Wonder" is a good account, at least of the naval side, of the evacuation from Dunkirk. (It would have been better still had the censorship been less destructive!)

But there is another side to war films. Besides being a good medium for propaganda, they are also one of the best methods of rapid instruction. Recently in the *Sunday Express* there was a leader on the idea of training all men—from 16–70—on how to use a rifle. It added "*The film can be a great aid and half a sheet of elementary instructions can be put in very simple terms.*" I do not recall a similar suggestion being made when the Home Guard was formed, or for that matter when the thousands of raw recruits were volunteering or being conscripted in the early months of the war. We move with the times. Now, after two years of war, we begin to recognise the use of film for training purposes!

There is much leeway to be made up in the way of military instructional films. *D.N.L.* has done a signal service by exposing anomalies which beset the use of films for this purpose in the services. In the House of Commons recently Viscount Hinchingbrooke said that he had seen only two since the war began. Perhaps readers will remember that in a letter to *D.N.L.* I pointed out that during 18 months in the Army, spent with G.H.Q. France, and with a training unit in this country, I never so much as heard of a film until January, 1941. And then it was one which had just been made, and of which the authorities were so ashamed that the majority opinion after its *première* was "Just-what-we-didn't-want; we-must-make-sure-this-is-never-shown-to-the troops"—the film having been made, by the way, by an all-army film unit! I might add that although I did not see a single training film during the whole of my 18 months in the Army, E.N.S.A. was kind enough to bring its mobile cinema to our village in France where my branch of G.H.Q.—from brigadiers to batmen—were regaled with programmes of Mickey Mouse films and Hollywood features!

Thinking about the scant use made of training films since has made me wonder. On one hand I hear there are plenty of training films in existence but not many projectors. If that is the case, then why is it that E.N.S.A. should have been so plentifully supplied with mobile cinemas? For surely training comes before entertainment, and, in any case, those projectors which were being used to show Mickey Mouse films *in the evenings only* could have been used to show instructional films during the day. Then there are others who tell me that there are plenty of projectors, but there are not sufficient training films. I don't know which is true, but the stories I have been told have been so contradictory that they make me wonder whether the whole business of training films for the army has not been seriously bungled.

Viscount Hinchingbrooke made the point in his speech reported in *D.N.L.* that films could provide an excellent record of manœuvres which could later be shown to the men who had taken part in them. It will be very interesting to see whether the War Office does anything about this.

The new army film unit is going to be very useful in providing records of fighting, both real and "mock" (manœuvres, etc.), which can then be used for both propaganda and instruction (as well as for record purposes after the war) propaganda to the general public (and for non-specialist showing to the troops) and instruction for the troops in specialist matters.

Readers of *D.N.L.* who are interested in military matters are bound to have read Tom Wintringham's articles, and even if they have found themselves in disagreement, either politic-

ally or militarily, will admit that these provocative articles have anticipated certain German tactics with remarkable foresight. I remember particularly an article in *Picture Post* in which he outlined a method of attack in depth by dive bombers and parachute troops, followed by a main attack by troops landed from boats and airborne troops, which anticipated the German attack upon Crete. If surprise is still a considerable factor in attack, then the best defence is still preparedness, not only with up-to-date equipment but with up-to-date ideas about military tactics. The Germans would have lost a proportion of the advantage gained by surprise if the men in Crete had known what to expect beforehand as Wintringham apparently did. (I appreciate that shortage of equipment was the deciding factor in Crete, but I think also that certain features of the defence—e.g. the loss of the air fields—suggested that our Command did not fully understand the tactics intended by the enemy until it was too late.) What Tom Wintringham could achieve in words and with a few photographs could have been reproduced even more vividly by the use of film. How useful a film of the attack on Crete would have been to other soldiers, and that is the type of film which must be made, either from actual battle scenes or pieced together from films taken during training. Troops without any battle experience do well in their first battle *if their training has been modern and realistic.* Films can help to provide that realistic background to normal training.

Background and an impression of military tactics are two of the subjects which can be shown by means of films. They are also important for teaching details and for revising a subject. Gas lectures, an example of teaching detail, in my opinion might well be replaced by a film on the subject. All too often these lectures consist of a perfunctory reading from a textbook by some person who is not particularly well versed in gas warfare, nor particularly interested in it. A film could do the job more efficiently and with less boredom for the rookie. Then, too, in initial stages of training the recruit is given so many fiddling details—e.g. about the parts of the rifle or of the Bren gun, including many seemingly irrelevant details such as weight of gun, weight of tripod, etc., etc.—to memorise that he needs some handy method of revision. Films could provide such a method.

The best soldier today is one who knows most about the whole subject of soldiering. He cannot expect to have a specialist's knowledge of the functions and powers of the various military arms, but he should have some general idea. The dangers of ignorance were well illustrated at Dunkirk when all too many men were driven to distraction because they thought our fighters were not doing their utmost over the Dunkirk beaches. Such ignorance is a reflection, not upon the men (who were probably rather less ignorant of the fundamental ideas of air-co-operation than their superiors—*vide* Crete!) but upon the high-ups who have not altogether got rid of the abysmal cannon-fodder idea which has no place in modern warfare, as—happily—such men as Sir John Dill and General Wavell repeatedly stress.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(*continued from p.* 189)

vant shots. There is not a single sync. sequence other than an office-desk scene introducing a pleasant woman canteen-manager who is to do the commentary for the rest of the film, and the only natural sound is the background to the non-stop commentary. This reduces the film to little more than a lantern-slide lecture; the points that this film wishes to make, important points, simply cannot be put over by a commentator announcing them, accompanied by vague mid-shots; some attempt should have been made to dramatise the story, and we have the right to expect it from people like Bond and Anstey. As a result, all that remains in the memory is not anything about canteens and feeding, but a pleasant pan over the yards of a locomotive works, and the superb free gesture of a worker as, left-handed, he slings out his tea-slops on to the workshop floor. The film, really, should have been about that worker and his mates.

How to Dig. *Production:* Selwyn Films Ltd. *Direction:* Jack Ellitt. *Camera:* Jack Parker. *Commentator:* Roy Hay. *Distribution:* M.O.I. Non-Theatrical. 15 mins.

How to Dig is a simple instructional film on digging, intended for beginners who have just taken over an allotment for the first time. It covers four ways of digging—starting from scratch, stripping the turf and bastard trenching with the turf buried one spit down, ordinary trenching with top and bottom spits reversed, digging with manure, and digging without manure. There are, of course, many other kinds of digging, but you will never get any two gardeners to agree on the simplest point, so the film is wise to limit itself to showing one way only, so as not to confuse the beginner.

The film is extremely well made; nicely shot, put together neatly, and the commentary clear and well punctuated. Apart from the usual gardener's quibbles, the only criticism that can be made of the film is that it is too idealistic. The man doing the work is obviously an expert gardener and he has a very light loam to work on. Off comes the turf, easy as pie, down goes the spade, one shove of the foot, coming up clean as a whistle, and the clods break up before they even reach the ground. Very few people will ever have ground so easy to work, where the spade doesn't clog with every spit taken. If beginners try to work their own soil with the ease and speed that this lad does, they'll half kill themselves in under an hour and be liable to get discouraged. But it's always pleasant to see a job done really well, and everybody, not beginners only, should be able to get something from this film.

H.M. Minelayer. *Production:* Verity. *Producers:* Sidney Box and James Carr. *Direction:* Henry Cass. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

THE OPENING scenes of *H.M. Minelayer* produce the atmosphere of a dramatic and exciting film. The mines move slowly into position and the ship prepares for the night's adventure. We want to know what's inside the envelope which the captain must not open until he is ten miles out, and with high hopes we wait for the minelayer to set sail. And then suddenly the atmosphere changes and we find ourselves looking at a scene which reminds us of a holiday cruise, as the minelayer sails out of harbour in a beautifully calm sea with the sun setting in the background. We realise our mistake but anxiously look for storm clouds and the flash of guns; but nothing happens. A mouth-organ, laughter, singing, at the sound of these all our lingering hopes of action die away.

The captain reads his orders, the mines are one by one dropped over the side. And then a plane is heard; a sailor asks if they should open fire, we feel like shouting yes, but the gunner is told to wait, and it goes away. The minelaying goes on, and all we feel is disappointment.

Cavalcanti and Watt made a much more exciting job of *North Sea* and the John Gillman only had fish on board. Why wasn't a mine dislodged? Why didn't the plane bomb the minelayer? Why weren't enemy mines narrowly missed? Why was I led to expect so much and then given so little? There seemed to be so many opportunities for action and all were missed. All the time I had waited for something to happen and nothing had.

The Pilot is Safe. *Production:* Crown Film Unit *Direction:* Jack Lee. *Photography:* Skeets Kelly *Distribution:* M.O.I. 5 minutes.

The Pilot is Safe is a simple film about the Channel Rescue Service. A fighter pilot coming back from a daylight sweep over France has to bale out over the Channel. He manages to climb into his inflated rubber dinghy and awaits rescue. Meanwhile his descent has been spotted by the Coastguard and Observer Corps who report to the Rescue Service. Rescue launches put out and a Westland Lysander takes off to try to spot for for them. After a time he is spotted from the shore again and the plane leads the launches to him. When the B.B.C. news is read that evening he is sitting with brother officers in London having a drink.

On the face of it, a plain enough tale, But the film has been shot and edited with such economy and energy that it takes on a quite vivid quality of excitement.Jack Lee is obviously a lad who, in his own way, has quite an independent contribution to make.

So much said, what of the film as a whole? In essence it is the same old Crown stuff, propaganda that with the change of names and uniform could be used without any alteration at all by Germany, Italy or Japan at will. There's the same old feeling of blind acceptance of your function as a cog in the machine, a feeling which Fascism knows only too well how to exploit, the same spoilt-baby pilot. And yet in a strange sort of way Jack Lee has managed to get a different sort of quality into the film as well. It may be the actual beauty of some of the shots—the launches putting out or speeding over a glass-smooth sea, the manœuvring of the Lysander, or it may be that he himself presents a certain critical attitude. Whatever it is, I invite him to hang on to it and fight for it for all he's worth, but I warn him that will take some doing.

SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR OCTOBER—NOVEMBER

The following bookings for October and November are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association

All's Well
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — Nov. 1st
American Spoken Here
The Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly — Oct. 30th
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 1st
An Airman's Letter to His Mother
Victoria Station News Theatre — Oct. 30th
Caballero College
The News Theatre, Leeds — Nov. 1st
Chained
The News Theatre, Leeds — 15th
Daghestan
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 15th
Dancing on the Moon
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 15th
Dog in the Orchard
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 15th
Escape to Never
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds — 8th
Filming the Fleet
The News Theatre, Nottingham — 15th
Fishing Fever
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 15th
Fools Who Made History, No. 2
The News Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
For Freedom
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — Nov. 15th
Fresh Fish
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 8th
From the Four Corners
The News Theatre, Nottingham — 1st
Harvest of the North
The News Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
Hobo Gadget Band
The News Theatre, Leeds — Nov. 8th
How the Old Place has Changed
The News Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
Kentucky
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — Nov. 8th
Land of Invention
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — 8th
Letter of Introduction
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds — Nov. 15th
Little Whirlwind
The News Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds — 25th
Lovely Wales
The News Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 8th
Man the Enigma
The News Theatre, Leeds — 1st
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — 8th
March of Time 4—6th Year
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool — Oct. 27th
March of Time 5—7th Year
The Waterloo Station News Theatre, London — 20th
Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly — 20th
Victoria Station News Theatre, London — 20th
March of Time No. 3—7th Year
The News Theatre, Newcastle — 25th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 25th
The News Theatre, Nottingham — Nov. 8th
Miracle at Lourdes
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool — Oct. 27th
Modern New Orleans
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — 25th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 25th
Moonrakers
The News Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 1st
Mr. Elephant Goes to Town
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — 8th
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — 15th
Natchez on the Mississippi
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Oct. 25th
New York Parade No. 1
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 15th
No Parking
The Victoria Station News Theatre, London — Oct. 27th
On Cambrian Heights
The News Theatre, Newcastle — 25th
Over the Hill
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 15th
Papa Gets the Bird
The News Theatre, Newcastle — 1st
Romeo in Rhythm
The News Theatre, Leeds — 15th
Royal Road
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Oct. 25th
Sojourn in Havana
The News Theatre, Leeds — Nov. 8th
Song of the Birds
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — Oct. 25th
Stranger Than Fiction 89
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 1st
The News Theatre, Leeds — 8th
Stranger than Fiction 82
The News Theatre, Nottingham — 8th
Swing Social
The News Theatre, Leeds — 1st
Take a Cue
The News Theatre, Nottingham — 8th
Tangled Television
The News Theatre, Leeds — 1st
That Man May Live
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 8th
The Answer
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool — Oct. 20th
The Great Conway
The News Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 15th
The Gun
Waterloo Station News Theatre, London — Oct. 30th
The Hockey Champ
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool — 20th
The Practical Pig
The Tatler News Theatre, Liverpool — 27th
The Seeing Eye
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — 25th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — Nov. 8th
The News Theatre, Leeds — 15th
The Tower of London
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
The Serving Army
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — Nov. 1st
The World in Action—No. 1. Mediterranean
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester — 1st
The Young in Heart
The Tatler Theatre, Leeds — Oct. 25th
Two for the Zoo
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — Nov. 1st
Unrecorded Victory
The News Theatre, Nottingham — Oct. 25th
Washington Parade
The Tatler Theatre, Chester — 25th
The News Theatre, Leeds — 25th
What's Your I.Q.?
The Tatler Newsreel Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 15th
Whispers
The Eros News Theatre, Piccadilly — Oct. 27th
The News Theatre, Newcastle — Nov. 1st
The News Theatre, Leeds — 1st
White Eagle
The News Theatre, Leeds — 8th
You Ought to be in Pictures
The News Theatre, Leeds — 8th

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FILM OF THE MONTH

MEET JOHN DOE

Production and Direction: Frank Capra for Warner Bros. *Script:* Robert Riskin. *Photography:* George Barnes. With Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold, Jimmy Gleason and Warren Hymen. Runs 2 hours.

Meet John Doe, we are told, is "the Capra production for 1941," so obviously we must make the most of the golden opportunity as it passes, for it's the only one we shall get for a whole year. Right then; out with all the carefully hoarded adjectives from the store cupboard, brush up all those unused superlatives, and, above all, produce your ration books, page 21 in the General Book, Spare B, because here is what Lord Woolton has been promising us for months, a load of American cheese generous enough to last us for years to come.

Edward Arnold, a newspaper and general business tycoon, buys up a newspaper and puts in Jimmy Gleason as editor to hot it up. Barbara Stanwyck, heart-throb column editor, is one of those to get the bullet and in her final column prints a letter from a mythical John Doe, saying as how he's fed up with all the unemployment and crookery that's going on in the world, and as a protest is going to jump to death from the City Hall on Christmas Eve at midnight. The mayor and governor assume that this is the first shot in an Edward Arnold attack, the public see there's liable to be some fun, and the newspaper office is filled next morning by a lot of out-of-works claiming to be John Doe. Barbara Stanwyck quickly sees her opportunity, gets her job back, picks Gary Cooper to be John Doe, instals him in a posh hotel, and starts a series of John Doe articles under the general heading of "I Protest." As a further build-up, she persuades Edward Arnold to give her programme-time for a John Doe broadcast, and she writes Gary Cooper a speech full of talk about neighbourliness and brotherly love which sweeps the country and gets good-neighbour John Doe clubs started all over the U.S. Edward Arnold pours money into the scheme until the clubs have reached a ten million membership, and then at a John Doe Clubs Convention plans to have Gary Cooper launch a new Fascist Party with him (Edward Arnold) as candidate for President. Gary Cooper refuses, so Edward Arnold exposes him and smashes the club movement. Gary Cooper decides to redeem himself by committing suicide as advertised, but Barbara Stanwyck and a decision of the clubs to re-form, persuade him that living for the cause is more glorious than dying for it. As you can see, the story is simply a rehash of *Mr. Deeds* and *Mr. Smith*, with a few topical touches.

Capra's career has been a very interesting one. Graduating through such films as *Platinum Blonde* and *American Madness*, he made his first comedy success, Damon Runyon's *Lady for a Day* and followed up with the phenomenally successful *It Happened One Night* (significantly enough one of the Hitler favourites), and *Broadway Bill*. Emboldened by the success he launched out into direct expositions of his own philosophy, pleasant and successful *Mr. Deeds*, dreary old *Lost Horizon*, vapid and adolescent *You Can't Take It with You*, lively *Mr. Smith*, and the shallow longueurs of *John Doe*. Capra's early films were distinguished by their slick construction and humorous cynicism. He had very much the lively journalistic approach somewhat on Ben Hecht lines, both in thought and in shooting. His films were economically shot and constructed, with plenty of camera movement and with the characters in dialogue scenes beautifully placed—particularly in close-ups. Be that as it may, Capra is a slick journalist of the type to be found in, for example, *The Front Page*; and we have seen over here only too often, what suckers the slick journalists are for anything in the line of pseudo religion, such as Oxford Group Ltd. Just as hard-headed business men will stand for hours poised over a fruit machine, praying and hoping to make their fortunes, so the hard-boiled cynics, who believe that everyone is out for himself, and everybody has a price, are the first to fall for the line that all that's wanted to change the world is more good-neighbourliness and kind-heartedness among people—particular attention, needless to say, being paid to rich people. In the nearly Capra, *American Madness*, we were solemnly presented with the thesis that all that's needed to stop the slump and the bank busts is for the great American public to trust their great American bankers and not start a run on the bank.

Typical of Capra's attitude is the theme, running through all his later films, that though rich men are more to be pitied than blamed and may be won over by kindness to a denatured version of the Sermon on the Mount, politics and politeness are beyond the pale and must not be touched with a barge-pole. This anarchist refusal of responsibility, this blindness to all facts you don't fancy, leads straight to Fascism, as Dr.

(*continued on page* 194)

THE CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY

Visited by a representative from D.N.L.

World-record circulation figures are being set up by the Central Film Library (see "Celluloid Circus" D.N.L. for August). Behind these figures is a small group of people who a year ago were faced with the job of arranging to distribute what looked like being a young avalanche of films from the M.O.I.—this on top of an increasing public demand for the films loaned by the Empire and G.P.O. Film Libraries, both of which are now merged in the Central Film Library. Recently the activities of the Ministry of Food Film Library were transferred to the Central Film Library.

IN THE despatch rooms and offices of the Library twenty assistants are handling the inwards and outwards flow of films. Going to the post is now a job for hand-trucks, for they are despatching about 350 reels per day. In the 16 mm. examining room ten assistants carry out a foot-by-foot inspection of the day's input of returned copies. Each assistant has her own rewind bench with underside and overhead lighting. The height and design of the benches and stools has been figured out to an inch so as to ensure comfortable working conditions.

Every reel is examined each time it passes through the library in order to be certain that the next borrower gets a good copy. Damage is surprisingly rare. All the same, in the interests of economy they write to the borrower who has scratched or mutilated a copy and advise him where particularly to overhaul his projector.

Apart from accidental damage the three general axioms are: Keep clean every pulley over which the film passes. Keep the gate free from dirt and accumulations of emulsion. Keep films off the floor. Dirt of any sort is damnation to a print. So important is this question that they have had a special cleaning machine built and have housed this in a gas chamber of the type you see in a laboratory. By means of this chamber fumes from the cleaning agents are by-passed out of the building. The machine itself is a mass of pulley-wheels and cleaning and polishing bobs. It cost upwards of £100 to design and build, and it performs rapidly and evenly a tedious process which used to be done by hand.

Nowadays, public libraries, exhibitions and special group audiences are being supplied with complete 60 minute programmes each comprised of four or five short films. The nature and content of the programmes is planned to meet the individual needs of the borrowers. Programmes are assembled on mammoth spools—1,600 feet on each—and more special benches and equipment have had to be designed and made for this side of the library's service.

The storage vaults are businesslike and have had to be specially planned. Storage has obviously been a big problem for there are many thousands of 16 mm. and 35 mm. copies to be dealt with. Actually there are a number of separate but interconnected vaults laid out with a view to an early future extension, for the demands of borrowers far exceed the available number of prints. New prints are going into the library just as rapidly as the processing laboratories can deal with standing orders.

Back in the general office I saw a super metal-cum-celluloid control system for dealing with the recording and mailing side of the job. There are six or eight thousand record-cards and you can put your hand on any individual card in four and a split seconds. But I am afraid I am too congenitally unsystematic myself to do justice to this side of the Library.

On leaving, one piece of news was given to me—fifty new films made or acquired by the M.O.I. go into the library this month. A list of titles of these appears on page 197.

(*continued from page* 193)

Buchman's open admiration of Hitler proves. If you don't like politicians, your job isn't to get decent people out of politics but to get them in. But, of course, Capra's view of people is hopelessly unrealistic, particularly his favourite puppet, the common man. From his stand-by, the Sermon on the Mount, he has culled the phrase about the meek inheriting the earth and decided the common man is going to be meek. Well, whatever the words used in the Sermon on the Mount were intended to mean, you can be quite sure it didn't mean anything so soft-hearted and soft-headed as Capra shows the common people. They may be meek in the sense of slow to move, slow to anger, slow to defend their interests, slow to articulate themselves, but, God, they're tough babies and not the namby-pambies Capra makes them. Of course, he's not fool enough to leave himself no get-out; he's retained from his unbeliever days enough cunning to cut in Walter Brennan or somebody looking disgusted at any particularly nauseating show of false sentiment, to try and have it both ways with his audience. But this duplicity doesn't really save him; the air of salesmanship and falsity remains. The most disgusting scene is where two old people from one of the John Doe clubs come up to Gary Cooper. Whilst the woman bends down and kisses his hand a white-haired old boy looks on with tears in his eyes mumbling "Thank you, Thank you." Now if Capra doesn't know that this sort of thing is not even true enough to be used as a symbol, it's time someone enlightened him. Old people are a pretty cunning lot and if they go about with tears in their eyes kissing people's hands you can be quite sure they're up to no good and have got some deep scheme on the trot. But it's almost always in comedies that the screen does try and approach the truth, in defiance of convention: Edgar Kennedy's father-in-law is much more real than that snivelling couple. Similarly, in a film, if you want a blind man you'll be forced to have white-haired benign Hobart Bosworth, it's only if you're W. C. Fields that you can have something nearer the truth, a cantankerous old codger who smashes your shop door, up-tips your show displays and interferes with your sale of cumquats. Again, in *John Doe*, Capra has that nasty masochist tinge in the relations between men and women that he had in *Mr. Deeds* and *Mr. Smith*; the women are smart and knowing and always one up on the men, when they do fall for them it's generally pity at the bottom of it; the men are innocent, worshipping and diffident, and generally look on themselves in a very guilty adolescent way. No doubt this sense of guilt business is carefully calculated by Capra: it fits so nicely in with the middle-class-Oxford Group-escapist philosophy he offers. But the common man, if he's worth his salt, will not waste his time saying "I'm a stinker; whip me, somebody whip me," but will decide what ought to be done and get on with it.

This is not to say that there is nothing good in *John Doe*. Warren Hymen is on the screen for a few seconds, and there are several good scenes, such as Gary Cooper getting into a muck-sweat before his first broadcast. Gary Cooper, in fact, does seem to realise the implications of his rôle and works like stink to knock some human decency into it. Edward Arnold too, is very good as the Fascist with his squads of S.S. men (incidentally it was a bit disingenuous of some critics, after years of coal and iron police, as in *Black Fury*, to express disbelief in the possbility of private police-forces), though here again the real anti-Fascist point is lost. It is not the big business-man, in the end, who exploits the fanatical religious mob leader: the religious lad always has the inside edge on the business man, as Thyssen and many another found out, when it comes to a show down, though no doubt some kind of *modus vivendi* can be arrived at, as in Germany today. I think old *John Doe* would have leapt at the chance of a political career and leadership of a party, particularly if it was given some new-fangled name, like New Party, or Party for People who are Fed-up with Politicians. By-the-by, what's happened to Father Coughlin these days? Jimmy Gleason, as usual, gives a fine performance and has one glorious opportunity for a drunken speech—shot very nicely in one continuous close-up. It was a pity that he couldn't take it straighter and had to drag in the business of "I'm an American," but no doubt things in America these days are too tough to allow anything stronger. Well, I suppose we must give Capra credit for daring to show one type of American Fascist, but in the end I'm afraid the effect of this film will be simply to prepare the ground for another much more dangerous model.

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FILM SOCIETY NEWS

The **Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee** and **Ayrshire** Societies all announced at a recent meeting of the Federation of Scottish Film Societies that they proposed to continue their activities this winter. The Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Oban, Stirling and Lochaber Societies which closed down at the beginning of the war are to remain closed. This means that the position of the Scottish Societies will be the same as it was last season. The operating Societies all propose to start in October, Edinburgh and Dundee each on seasons of ten meetings with both afternoon and evening performances. Ayrshire also with ten meetings with afternoon performances at Kilmarnock and evening performances at Prestwick: Aberdeen, with six afternoon meetings. Owing to certain initial difficulties with the film position and with booking arrangements, which have, however, now been solved, none of the Societies have, so far, made any definite arrangements regarding programmes but there are one or two preliminary suggestions.

Edinburgh are considering opening their season with *Nous les Jeunes* and including in later programmes *The Last Night* and *Drame de Shanghai* (in a Sino-Japanese programme). Last season this Society experimented with a microphone spoken English commentary linked to the sound track of the untitled Polish film *The Day of the Great Adventure*, the commentary being translated and composed by Mr Forsyth Hardy in conjunction with a Polish officer stationed in Scotland. This season Mr. Hardy and a member of the Czech army are contemplating a similar experiment with the film *Pred Matouritou*. Edinburgh also intend to include in their programmes a number of the London Film Society's early experimentals which may now be available.

Ayrshire would like to start with *Circonstances Attenuantes* and will include in their season a number of specially composed programmes each built round a specific subject. Those under consideration are Czechoslovakia (to include *Reka* and *The Rape of Czechoslovakia*), the U.S.S.R. (with probably *The Last Night* or *We from Kronstadt*), The Netherlands, the *American Contemporary Scene* and *The Development of the Movie Industry*. It is proposed to include in these programmes a musical introduction and interlude on gramophone records, also an occasional introductory speaker from the country dealt with, if possible. Films under consideration for inclusion in the ordinary programmes are *La Marseillaise*, *Piéges*, *Ils Etaient Neuf Célibataires*, *Hotel du Nord*, and *Le Dernier Tournant*.

The **Aberdeen Society** has not, so far, decided on any particular films, but its programmes will be similar in composition to those of previous seasons.

The recent acquisition by the British Film Institute of the films which used to be rented by Unity Films Limited will form a useful and easily accessible reservoir of French Feature Films for Film Society programmes. Quite a number of these films such as—*Drame de Shanghai*, *Au Service de la France*, *Jouer D'Echecs*, *Les Bas Fonds*, *Alerte en Mediterranée*, and *Ignace*, have not been widely used in Film Society programmes so far, and although, perhaps, not in the first rank might be interesting enough in a suitable programme.

United Curzon, European Film Distributors, L. Chafir and Studio One have all got useful lists of films which could be used this season, but Secretaries are recommended to apply direct to the British Film Institute who have recently compiled a useful list of all Continental Feature Films available—it is a surprisingly formidable list.

The Seventh season of the **Dundee Film Society** opened on Sunday, 19th October, with *Remontons les Champs Elysées*. This is the Sacha Guitry film with which the last season should have closed. Following this *Der Spiegel*, an Austrian film, the last to leave the country before the Anchluss, with Paula Wessely, is the choice.

As is only natural, the international situation reflects on the supply of films available for showing. While no new French films have come into the country for more than a year, several new Russian productions are believed to be now on their way. These have not yet been titled in English, but as soon as this is done, one or more will be presented.

Among the best are *Suvarov*, a biographical film, celebrating the famous general of Catherine the Great's time, *Musical Story*, a ballet film with classical and modern Russian music, and *Volga Volga*, a musical comedy now playing on the stage in New York.

The **Scottish Churches Film Guild** (Glasgow Branch) held the first branch meeting of the new session in Greyfriar's Church Session Room, Albion Street, on Tuesday, 14th October, at 7.15, when Religious Films were reviewed.

SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

PREPARATIONS are being made for the third war-time session of the **Aberdeen Scientific Film Club.** Two years ago, under the auspices of the local branch of the Association of Scientific Workers, it was decided tentatively to attempt the running of a series of scientific film shows at which only the best available scientific films would be shown. It was realised from the start that specialist films did not exist in sufficient quantity to provide specialists with a show of films month by month. It was therefore necessary to attempt attracting the public at large to these shows and strike a balance in the programme put on. Quite evidently there was a demand for this type of educational entertainment for the response was good beyond all expectation. The S.F.C. thus took its place at the side of the W.E.A. in providing adult education and at the same time offering opportunity for showing more highly specialised films to more highly trained members of the audience. One of the surprises of the venture was the keen interest taken in the highly specialised films. In the course of the first session some thirty films were shown to about one hundred and twenty-five members. As far as possible films were shown in series designed to explore various aspects of a given subject. It was found that this was very difficult to carry out over long periods and ultimately it was decided that it was better to show films on their intrinsic merits.

A year ago the second session of the club was advertised and before original members had bestirred themselves to re-join—they assumed that the club would take their rejoining as a foregone conclusion—sufficient new members had come forward to more than fill the available seating space. A few days of excitement followed with urgent press advertisements, etc., whereby the whole membership was browbeaten into dividing itself into two sections to attend shows held on successive nights. So the second session started with shows held in duplicate, and both "houses" practically full. The membership had risen to about two hundred and fifty.

What the third season holds is still uncertain. Indications are that interest is as keen as ever and that even a fall in the quality of programmes due to war-time conditions would not lessen the attendances. A further equal jump in the number of members would necessitate one of two things (a) closing of the books, (b) migration to a local cinema, in which case shows would have to be held on a Sunday. There would be certain marked advantages in this change. Up to the present the club has shown only 16 mm. films, and by going to a cinema a hitherto untapped supply of 35 mm. films would become available. This in itself would lessen the difficulties of programme building. Films are not getting any more plentiful. There is a vast field of possibility in the making of scientific films waiting to be explored—the Aberdeen Scientific Film Club could supply ideas that would keep producers busy for years—but war-time necessities are diverting energies in other directions.

The developments of this third season of what may justly be called a pioneer educational venture are awaited with interest, and the policy of the club, if it is supported as in the first and second seasons is, no matter what the demands, to endeavour to rise and meet them.

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DIVE BOMBERS

By A MERCHANT SEAMAN

An actuality account, reprinted by permission of the B.B.C.

SAILING AT SEA in the last war you merely had your surface raider to look after or your periscope to look out for or your occasional minefield. But in this one, you've got a combination of all those together, and added to that you have something that you can only describe in the Biblical words "The terror that flies by night"; only it's not night, it's the dive bombers.

We've just about got him taped now, believe me, because when we get in the danger area we *know* that all sorts of things can happen to us, but above all, we can expect a submarine, and we get the old four-inch gun ready and we have her loaded and we are standing down and we get the Hotchkiss gun out and we clean it and polish it and we practise with it and we are all set and ready, and the ship does on doing her steady 200 miles a day, and you get closer and closer and closer into that area, and the sea turns from black into deep green, and you know that you are coming in, and you're coming in, but you're waiting for him—you've got a gun—you can defend yourself! And one evening, out of a clear sky, he'll come on you! you see him there, right up in the distance—a tiny little speck—and you whip out your binoculars and you look at him and you say, "Now, what is it, what is it—is it a Lockheed, is it a Sunderland?" and you watch it, and suddenly, an idea flashes right across the back of your mind: "My God, it is!" and you make one flying dive towards the Hotchkiss, and you scream out "Aircraft attack!—Whip the covers off: she's loaded and ready, get behind." He's coming down to you, he's coming down, and the noise is screaming and screaming, and you think to yourself: "My God, he's coming *for* me, for *me*, for ME!" and you're standing there, and you can feel the sweat running down the back of your knees, and he gets closer and closer, and you can see those horrible splashes of the bullets as they come across the water and go ripping across the deck—and there's a noise like the opening of the gates of hell, and he's gone—and he's dropped his bombs,—and missed you!

And you stick another clip in, and you wait for him to come back—and he will come back, and he gets his sights all set, and he has you there, dead ready, and he comes down in a screaming tearing dive, and you stand there and you're *paralysed* with fright and you don't know which way your deflection is and you don't know whether you oughtn't to drop the whole damn thing and go over the side—and you pray—and he comes close to you—and you let one little burst go out, and you see the tracer bullets, and you say "God! I've GOT him!" switch it just a little over to starboard. "Let her go, boys, he's going right into it!" And he does—he walks right into the bullets—right smack into them! He gives one enormous leap into the air, like a tremendous hiccup—UP—and then *down*—and he crashes—and you leave your gun, and you go and look over the side, and you watch it there in the water—a funny little black blob. Then the skipper turns round and says, "Well, boys, *they* don't deserve it, they wouldn't do it to us—they're only rats! But go on—lower the boat—pick 'em up!"

CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY

Supplementary list of 35 mm. and 16 mm. films produced for or acquired by the Ministry of Information and available from the Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, London S.W.7. on free loan to approved borrowers as from October 20th, 1941.

NOTE. *: *Indicates 16 mm. version only.* †: *Indicates 35 mm. version only. Numerals refer to page 8 of D.N.L. (Volume II) on which the film is reviewed. All the titles listed are sound films. Silent versions of some M.O.I. films are in course of preparation.*

THE FIGHTING FORCES

Merchant Seamen. A dramatic story of the Battle of the Atlantic. (88)

***Britain's R.A.F.** The story of the first Battle of Britain, told by the March of Time.

***War Front.** Round the Home Fronts with the news photographers. (68)

Winged Messengers. Carrier pigeons join up. (128)

A.T.S. Jobs for women in the Army. (128)

Airwoman. The W.A.A.F.'s in action. (149)

Sea Cadets. Junior candidates for the Senior Service. (149)

Lion of Judah. Haile Selassie returns to Addis Ababa.

***The White Eagle.** The story of Free Poland in Britain. (149)

CIVIL DEFENCE

Citizen Army. Home Guards in training against invasion. Non-T version of:

†**Home Guard.** A story of Britain's Citizen Army in training. (28)

***Sailors Without Uniform.** The fishermen-sailors of Britain.

***S.O.S.** A day at a Lifeboat Station.

Night Watch. The Wardens are always there. (128)

Citizens' Advice Bureau. Where to enquire for information and advice.

Queen's Messengers. The Ministry of Food's blitz convoys and canteens. (129)

***Emergency Cooking Stove.** How to build and use an outdoor stove.

***Simplified First Aid.** Elementary hints for everyone.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

From the Four Corners. Why the Empire fights with Britain; with Leslie Howard.

Peoples of Canada. The peoples from Europe who built a nation in Canada, and now fight to preserve its freedoms.

Visit from Canada. A village gets to know the Princess Pat's. (107)

***Australia at War.** Australia's war effort and strategic position in the Pacific, reviewed by the March of Time. (107)

It's the Navy. The Royal Australian Navy puts to sea.

Australia Marches with Britain. Australia mobilises her natural and industrial resources.

Sinews of War. South Africa arms and equips her own forces.

***Five Faces.** The people and industries of Malaya, key to the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Alert in the East. On guard from Suez to Singapore, from Singapore to Hong Kong.

FOOD FRONT

Kill That Rat! How to wipe out rats in the country. (107)

The Rabbit Pest. The best way to clear land of rabbits. (128)

How to Dig. (191)
Sowing and Planting.
Cultivation.
Harvesting and Storing.
} How to grow good crops in gardens and allotments. Commentary by Roy Hay. Each 12–15 minutes in length. (The last two films will not be available until January, 1942)

When the Pie was Opened. Len Lye's Woolton Pie. (47)

Two Cooks and a Cabbage. The right and wrong way to cook cabbages. (168)

Crust and Crumb. A dozen good uses for stale bread.

Roots of Victory. Home grown vegetables for health.

***Tea is Served.** From the plantation in Ceylon to the teapot.

The New Bread. The National Wheatmeal loaf.

***Simple Soups.** Some recipes for soups.

***All about Carrots.** Some good ways of serving carrots.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Living with Strangers. Country people help the townspeople to feel at home. (149)

***Carry on Children.** Child health services from birth to adolescence.

Defeat Diphtheria. Why every child should be immunised and what mothers should do. (107)

***Breath of Danger.** Preventing the common cold.

U.S.A.

***America Speaks Her Mind.** From the invasion of Poland to the Lease-Lend Bill; a review by the March of Time.

LABOUR AND ARMAMENTS

***Ulster.** Northern Ireland's industries at war. (9)

***Scotland Speaks.** A story of Scotland's war effort.

***Steel Goes to Sea.** Building ships for the merchant fleets and the Navy.

SALVAGE, SAVINGS AND THRIFT

***It All Depends on You.** Paper salvage.

THE RELUCTANT DRAGON

By FRANCIS RODKER, who has been responsible for the animation and effects work in such recent films as *Ack-Ack*, *Distillation* and *Airscrew*.

Reluctant Dragon makes its rather less publicised appearance shortly after the much heralded *Fantasia*, and of the two, the former scores the bigger hit. It is one of the best pieces of entertainment yet shown on the screen. After the rather un-Disneyfied *Fantasia* we revel again in real Disney, this time with the long-awaited peep behind the scenes. We are not shown the complete organisation; but just enough of the really interesting stuff is put across to give a vivid impression of great thoroughness and creative talent.

The opening black and white titles with their caricatures of Disney technicians give a sense of something good to come. They round off with the neat touch—"Any resemblance between this film and a regular motion picture is purely coincidental."

The film is brimful of fun which it is a temptation to write about, but for the present purpose some of the technical and informative aspects of the film will be mentioned.

Never has any instructional film been put across with such clarity and entertainment as is the little locomotive cartoon—with its sound effects team operating at full pelt. It really is amazing to see the variety of oddments which combine to make up the sound effects. A matchbox crushed in front of the microphone provides the noise of the giant trestle-bridge collapsing in the storm. The screech of the locomotive brakes is produced by slowly scraping a sheet of glass. The simple black and white treatment takes us right back to pioneer cartooning and we feel that we have never known colour. This seems to emphasise the brilliance of Disney's gags. An extraordinary amount of jitter goes unnoticed. In fact it is to the credit of this film that pure cartoon is the keynote, with little or no attempt closely to imitate live action.

After looking at black and white it is with something of a shock that we are plunged into technicolour with Robert Benchley staring in amazement at the huge multiplane camera in operation with its coloured lights, shining steel structure, loaded with mysterious gadgets and its team of operators. Benchley seems to adapt himself to the environment pretty quickly, but one cannot help wondering whether he really gets the hang of it all.

In principle the machine is really a miniature stage turned over on its back with a camera mounted on top. The scenery is painted on sheets of clear glass placed one behind the other about 14 inches apart. There are about five of these glass planes each with its own lighting. When set up in the machine and viewed through the camera the whole scene has the appearance of great depth. In the film we do in fact look through the view-finder, and, as the camera approaches the first plane or foreground, we have the feeling of going right in amongst the trees, yet actually the whole distance from front plane to last is only about six feet. Each plane is capable of individual movement so that foreground and background objects can be moved *perspectively*. This can be likened to viewing the scenery from a moving train, when near objects appear to pass at a greater speed than far ones. The planes move as required on graduated scales. The operators, working to a chart, set the character drawings and planes ready for each single photograph, then call out the numbers on the scale as a check. The lights then come on and the camera takes the picture. This procedure takes place for every single picture on the film, the movements for characters, background and camera being previously calculated. It is this calling out and checking of position that we hear softly in the background as we first glimpse this camera.

The spell of this splendid machine is soon broken by the friendly personality of the cameraman perched on high, who eventually directs our attention to a simpler camera whereon Donald Duck is in the process of being animated! In contrast to the multiplane, this is a single or contact plane camera, the character drawings being placed in contact with the background. Donald must needs take the words out of the commentator's mouth to explain his own animation in true Donald style. Somehow we forget that his voice is man-made, although we heard it being done only five minutes earlier.

The riot of colour achieved in the colour mixing sequence is certainly an epic in Technicolour. After seeing this it is all the more surprising that sometimes rather muddy looking colours appear in *Fantasia*.

Colour is always applied to the back of the celluloid character drawings in order that the ink lines on the front shall show and form an accurate boundary. This is seen when the colour is applied to the little deer which eventually animates against its own background.

The tale of Baby Weems is told by a series of still sketches, quite roughly drawn for Disney's approval before going into production. Artists sketch from a real baby who provides an admirable character study for a story cartoon.

The sketches appear in close-up as the commentator relates the episode. So snappy is the whole sequence that the absence of animation is hardly noticed. Indeed, a head is turned in only two drawings, one front view and the other, side, yet we have the impression of a complete turn. It would be interesting to know just how few drawings would produce animation. How many people have noticed that some of Disney's characters have three-fingered hands? It obviously seems to cut down working and drawing time and is really quite immaterial from any other point of view. And what a very simple but effective idea is the drawing pad whose pages flick over to show a pencilled Goofy in action! These are just some of the many little tricks of the trade employed in cartoon production and divulged here and there throughout the film.

In a new vein of Disney humour is the cartoon entitled "How to ride a horse," with Goofy kindly providing both the audience and his horse with a great deal of laughter. The animated blue-print showing what happens to a man's heart and liver when he rides a horse the wrong way, is one of the brightest things that Disney has yet screened. This speedy adventure seems to end only too soon before we are back with Benchley again in the projection theatre where Disney and his experts are about to witness the showing of *The Reluctant Dragon*.

One feels at the end of this film that Disney's store of slackstick is nowhere near exhausted. So long as he keeps to his fantastic characters he is not treading on dangerous ground. But his efforts to imitate in cartoon the movements of human beings are bound to cause comparison between drawn and actual movement. The cartoon medium calls for cartoon characters and movement, and after *Snow White*, *Pinnochio* and *Fantasia*, *Reluctant Dragon* serves to remind us of this fact.

PROPAGANDA IN SWEDEN

Abstracted from the *Manchester Guardian*. Abridged

MR. GEORGE GIBSON, ex-chairman of the T.U.C., who has recently returned from his visit to Stockholm, told the *Manchester Guardian* that "Our people seem to think that propaganda merely consists in sending out approved pictures and issuing statements from time to time. They don't set out consciously to impress the people with British culture. It is of no use sending them photographs of the Royal Family or notables. What they are interested in is how the people of England are getting on with their work, with rationing, and how they look after evacuated children." The Swedes were boycotting the Nazi-subsidised press, and the trade unions were starting papers of their own.

Sweden had more cinemas in proportion to its population than any other European country, and George Formby was the most popular star. "In fact, I got some reflected glory by saying I came from Lancashire," said Mr. Gibson. The exhibitors were quite willing to keep German newsreels and shorts out of their programmes if they could get enough British films. More newsreels and two-reel shorts were chiefly needed.

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